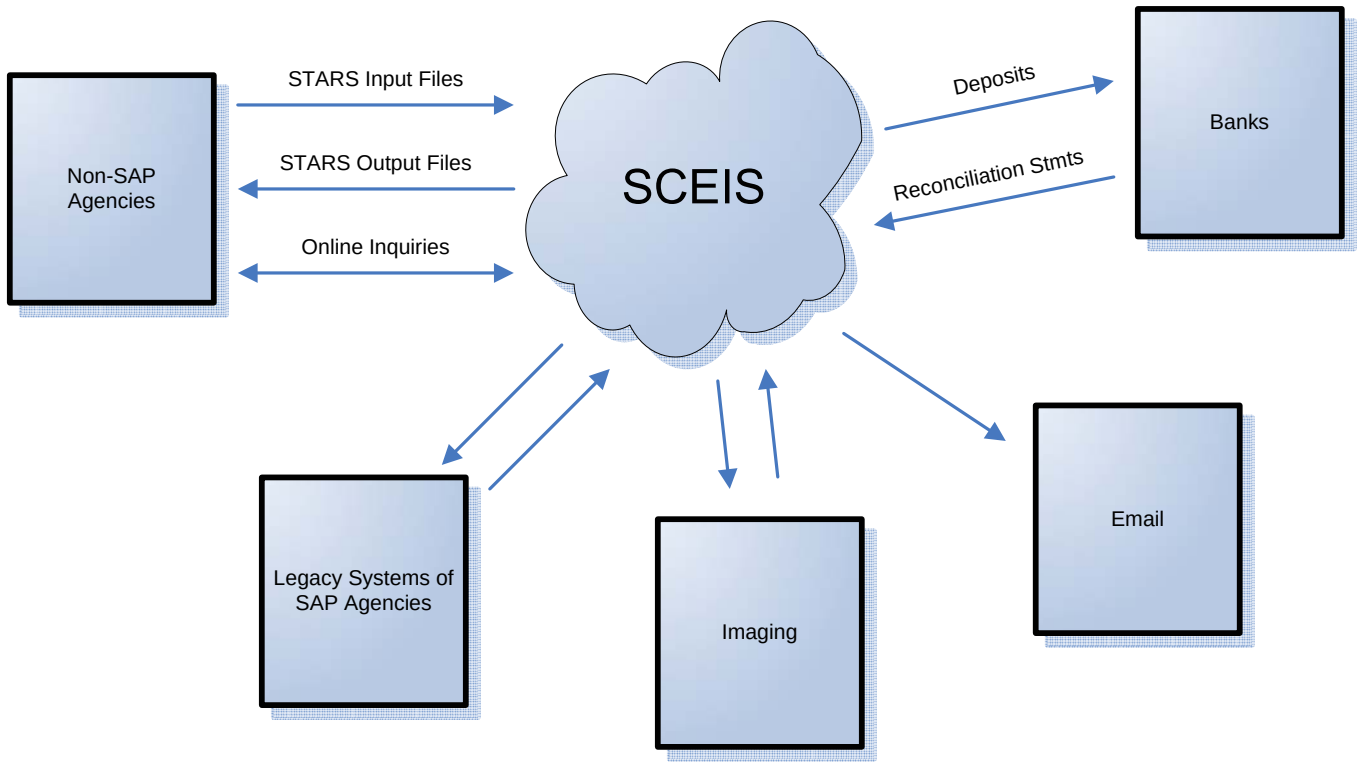
4.5 Interface Strategy

4.5.1 Introduction

Interfaces are implemented to allow communication between SCEIS and external entities such as banks, vendors, and agencies' legacy systems. It is critical that interfaces are identified and earmarked for development during the Blueprinting phase of an ERP implementation.

Exhibit 4.5.1-1 Interface Integration with SCEIS



The Interface Strategy provides a general plan for the implementation of interfaces to the SCEIS solution landscape. This Plan provides a framework for how interfaces from external systems will be constructed and integrated to the core SCEIS solution components. This Plan includes:

- Roles and Responsibilities.
- High-level architectural recommendation and guidelines.
- Interface design and development process.
- Interface request process flow.

The Interface Strategy describes the guidelines and the logic of designing interfaces to the SCEIS solution landscape. This is a "living document" that will be updated as needed during the lifecycle of the project. In addition, this document will support and integrate with many functional and change management strategies and documents.

Audience

The intended audience for the Interface Strategy includes the Project Directors, Project Managers, and the SCEIS Project Team.

Roles and Responsibilities

Overall roles and responsibilities for the Interface Strategy include:

SCEIS Technical Team

- Create the initial interface strategy.
- Review with Project Team and Project Management.

SCEIS Project Management Team

- Review initial/revised interface strategy.
- Identify and suggest issues/changes to SCEIS Technical Team.
- Recommend information distribution plan to appropriate agencies.

Project Team Leads

- Provide functional interface requirements.
- Serve as subject matter experts when reviewing final interface requirements.
- Sign off on all QA testing.

4.5.2 Interface Strategy

Objectives

The objective of the SCEIS interface strategy is to recommend and define the following:

- Roles and Responsibilities.
- High-level architectural recommendation and guidelines.
- Interface design and development process.

- Interface request process flow.

Interface Strategy Recommendations and Guidelines

The SCEIS solution components comprising ECC, SRM, EP, and BW will replace many legacy systems currently in use by the State of South Carolina agencies; however, it will not replace all components or functionality. The business requirements that are not met by this ERP will be met by interfacing the legacy systems with the needed functionality to the ERP systems where appropriate and feasible.

Interface Strategy will be based upon several guiding principles:

- The State will leverage as much of the SCEIS solution functionality as possible to accommodate the needed business functionality. Interfacing legacy systems or third party systems where appropriate will accommodate requirements falling outside of the SCEIS solution.
- Both incoming and outgoing data files will be in standard SCEIS solution formats.
- The Functional teams are responsible for providing functional specifications for all of the interfaces. They will also be responsible for testing the interfaces and signing off on the finished development.
- Standard SCEIS solution interface technology such as ALE/IDOC will be leveraged where possible.
- The State will implement error handling and security functionality for the interfaces in non-SCEIS solution environments such as O/S, network, etc.

Interface Design and Development Process

The Interface Design requires completion of the below steps. As a living document, the Design must be updated through out the implementation of the project.

Exhibit 4.5.2-1 Interface Design Process

Perform detailed analysis and complete functional specification

Interfaces to SCEIS solution systems from non-SCEIS solution systems will require a complete and detailed functional specification. This document is produced by the collaborative efforts between the functional and technical teams. The functional teams will identify the functional requirements for the specific systems such bank updates, EDI, etc. After the functional requirements are identified, the technical team will determine the underlying technical design.

Examples of key functional information needed are as follows:

- Is there an existing or standard interface available?
- Who are the senders/receivers?
- What is the file format / record layout from the SCEIS solution /interfaced system?
- What is the data transfer protocol to/from SCEIS (ftp, email, Direct Access Storage Device - DASD)
- How should errors be handled?
- What is the frequency (daily, monthly, etc.)?

A detailed specifications document will be completed from the information provided. A sample Interface Request Form has been included in the appendix of this blueprint.

Develop Interface

The interface will be created from the functional specifications document. The underlying design such as shell scripts, custom code (ABAP, Java, etc.) will be determined and developed by the technical team.

Testing

The interface will be sufficiently tested in both the development and quality assurance environments by the functional teams.

Migrate to Production

Once the interfaces are built, tested, and approved the technical team will move the changes to the production SCEIS environment.

Liaisons

A key factor in the success of interfaces is identifying the resource or liaison on the other end of the interface. This person or person(s) will be responsible for insuring that the interfaced legacy or third party systems are available and in compliance with the interface design.

Because of the importance of their roles, the technical team recommends that this resource be identified in the functional specification document.

Exhibit 4.5.2-2 Interface Request Process